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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today, once again, we are pleased to have as our guest Chaplain the Reverend Charles V. Antonicelli, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Washington, DC.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we praise Your name today. With the Psalmist we proclaim, "Praise the Lord, my soul. I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God while I live."

We thank You for the gift of life and for the talents and abilities You have given us. Help us, Lord, to put them to good use so that Your glory might shine through us.

Bless the men and women of this Senate as they seek to do Your will this day, bless their staff members who do so much work behind the scenes, and bless the pages who serve in this Chamber. Help them all to know the importance of their work here and let them know Your goodness to them.

We ask this in Your holy name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period for morning

business until 10 a.m. At 10 a.m., the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1, the prescription drug benefits bill. Chairman GRASSLEY will be in the Chamber at that time and will be prepared to offer the necessary changes to the legislation. It is then hoped we will begin an orderly consideration of amendments.

I know there are a number of Members on both sides of the aisle considering offering amendments. I encourage Senators to work with the chairman and ranking member, the managers of the bill, to schedule consideration of those amendments. As amendments are offered, we will begin scheduling votes in order to make progress on this bill over the course of this week.

As I had laid out previously, we will finish the legislation prior to the July 4 recess. I look forward to substantive debate as we go forward in addressing this bill.

We will have rollcall votes throughout today's session. For the information of all Senators so they can plan for the next week and a half, we will have votes on Friday and next Monday on this bill. We have had two good days of substantive opening statements where Members have been allowed to discuss their views on this important program of Medicare, how we can best strengthen it, how we can best improve it, and at the same time add a substantial prescription drug benefit in a way that can be sustained over the next 10, 15, 20 years, where we know there is going to be this unprecedented demographic shift of doubling of the number of seniors over the next 30 years.

So I am very pleased with the bipartisan progress we have made to date. I am pleased that we will be able to go with amendments early in the course of today and look forward to addressing a number of those amendments over the course of the day.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. As we all knew yesterday, the problem with not having amendments was that CBO had not completed scoring on the Medicare bill. It is my understanding there is scoring on the bill and Senators GRASSLEY and BAUCUS will offer either some technical changes or maybe a substitute to comply with mistakes made by staff during the very busy weekend they had.

Is that the understanding of the leader?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, that is generally my understanding. Again, for our colleagues, in order for the process to start and to allow us to really begin the amendment process, we have to have what is called a scoring from CBO. We were in touch with them at 8:30 and 9 this morning. It is my understanding we will have that scoring, but before I can say anything further with absolute certainty, we will know something in the next 30 minutes or so. Once we get that scoring that is both in the aggregate but also line by line—and we did not have a line by line at 7 this morning, and people are working around the clock on it, but once we have that line by line, we will be able to go directly to the managers' package and then also directly to the amendments. I am very hopeful that at 10 this morning that process will start.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say to the leader, now that we have had people make a lot of opening statements, we are waiting to offer amendments. Senator STABENOW is going to offer our first amendment, following whatever the managers decide to do with their opening amendments.

So we are anxious to go to work, and hopefully we can do that as soon as possible. However, as we all know, it cannot be done until the scoring is complete. Otherwise, a point of order

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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